Presentation on

Commission for Sustainable Development
Side event: From CSD to Millennium Development Summit- the challenges for the next decade

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by

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1. Introduction:

I am pleased to participate in this side event, organized by the Stakeholder Forum titled: From CSD to Millennium Development Summit- the challenges for the next decade. Last year the CSD reviewed the progress in the implementation of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) in the areas of “Water, Sanitation and Human Settlements”.

This year the CSD will formulate a blueprint for a better, more equitable global environment for the same thematic clusters. Water is a crucial factor in achieving most of the MDGs and is linked to the issues of human settlements, health, food and nutrition, sanitation, human rights, industrial processes, energy and environment. Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) is therefore the key to success for reaching the WSSD targets.

While some progress has been achieved in meeting the internationally agreed goals and targets in these areas, such gains have varied among regions and major challenges remain. A lack of political will at both international and national levels has hampered progress, notably in resource mobilization, tariff and subsidy reform, and the enforcement of water pollution laws and regulations.

2. The Challenges of Water Resource Management in Africa

The current status of water resources management and development in Africa constitutes a serious handicap to Africa’s production and improved productivity and competitiveness. Without addressing the water needs, Africa will continue to remain unable to feed itself and remain uncompetitive in the global markets. Water is the driving force for sustainable development, including environmental integrity and the eradication of poverty and hunger. It is indispensable for food security, human health and welfare. The mismanagement of water resources, however, are a potential source of conflicts in
countries sharing river basins and have been a source of conflicts in countries affected by demographic explosion and flows of refugees in Africa.

However, the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) is determined to work with the international community in resolving water related problems faced by the African people. There is an urgent need to increase service provision for many millions of African people still lacking access to safe water and sanitation. There is also need to increase service provision for irrigation to produce more food to alleviate poverty. Therefore, it becomes critical to solicit the necessary political support and commitment by governments and international partners to accord high priority to the development of water resources.

Furthermore, in Africa, most river basins are shared by several countries. This by its very nature creates challenges in introducing water governance essential for integrated water resources management (IWRM) and development. The key issue is to improve the water governance necessary for the development of water projects aimed to meet the basic, economic, agricultural and environmental needs for all sectors in these shared river basins. It is also essential to have in place good and operational river basin organizations for effective implementation of the IWRM principles.

An optimum water resources plan needs to be developed with the cooperation of all the states in the basin and also agreements need to be made for the joint development of the shared water resources. Many of the basins are environmentally degraded and the development of water resources will involve detailed environment action plans to ensure their sustainability. National and regional cooperation therefore must be enhanced for effective planning, development and management at river basin level.

It is also important to embark on comprehensive resource mobilization activities for increased financial investments in the water sector with the view of attaining the Africa Water Vision Targets and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In fulfilling this, the NEPAD Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee
set targets for expenditures of African governments at 5% for Water and Sanitation for the next 5 years. The objectives of the NEPAD water and sanitation programme include:

- To ensure sustainable access to safe and adequate clean water supply and sanitation, especially for the poor;
- To plan and manage water resources to become a basis for national and regional cooperation and development;
- To systematically address and sustain ecosystems, biodiversity and wildlife;
- To cooperate on shared rivers among member states;
- To effectively address the threat to climate change; and
- To ensure enhanced irrigation and rain-fed agriculture production and food security as well as increased hydropower production.

In addition, the African Development Bank’s initiative to support NEPAD by undertaking situation assessments in seven of Africa’s most important river basins is an important contribution to Africa’s efforts to address the linkage between water resource management and the overall development agenda.

3. **Main Issues and Challenges to be addressed at CSD-13:**

- One of the first targets adopted at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development Policies was that all countries should have developed integrated water resources management (IWRM) and water efficiency plans by 2004. Most African countries still have to address this challenge. How can the deliberations at CSD-13 facilitate this process, as a means to achieving the MDG goal on environmental sustainability?
- It is important to link water resources planning to national development planning to ensure that it addresses real needs and reflects real constraints. This point should be emphasized as one of the objectives of CSD-13.
- IWRM plans should be based on a clear understanding of the availability of water on the one hand and the potential uses of water on the other. The challenge of
IWRM planning is to find the most cost-effective ways to reconcile the supplies and demands.

- Better management of water use is often the most cost-effective way of reconciling demand and supply. However, where the resource is relatively underdeveloped and under-used, there may be limited scope for using demand management and related conservation techniques to achieve water security.

- One obstacle to the development of practical IWRM plans is the absence of adequate information on water resources. In most countries, data is either inadequate or too unreliable for meaningful use in strategic planning for development. Attention should therefore be given to the systematic development and maintenance of hydrological information systems in the CSD-13 deliberations.

- Even where there are adequate national frameworks for water resource management, this does not address the challenge of cooperative development in shared basins. Institutional arrangements are needed to facilitate such cooperation. CSD-13 could look into mechanisms to create such institutional arrangements to achieve cooperative development.

- At all levels, effective institutional arrangements for the management of water resources require the engagement of stakeholders from the community of water users as well as members of broader civil society and the private sector. How can the larger community be better engaged in the management of these resources? How do we ensure that no one is denied access to water simply because of inability to pay for it?

- In most of over 60 significant shared river basins in Africa, there are no institutions to promote cooperation management. Effectiveness of existing institutions leaves room for improvement. As with the development of national IWRM plans, the aim should not be to establish basin organizations for the sake of it. What is important is that effective institutional arrangements should be put in place to promote cooperation and achieve common goals. This point should be emphasized during the CSD-13 deliberations.
4. **Conclusions**

The year 2005 presents African leaders and their international partners with unprecedented opportunities to bring about a real change by influencing the development agenda. This year marks the fifth anniversary of the Millennium Declaration which gave birth to the Millennium Development Goals, which represent a global commitment to the reducing by one-half, the number of those living in extreme poverty by 2015. A simple extrapolation of poverty trends since 1990 would suggest that the world is on track to halving income-poverty by 2015, except perhaps with regards to Africa, unless the approach of “business as usual” is abandoned. Access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation actually slowed down in the 1990s compared with earlier decades. However, with adequate investment, the full realization of the Millennium Development Goals on our planet by 2015 is not an impossible dream.

May I also draw your attention to a potentially positive development in a recent report issued by the World Bank and IMF today, titled “World Bank and IMF Seek Doubling of Aid to Poor Lands”. The report calls for the doubling of ODA for the poorer countries as one tool in addressing the challenge of meeting the MDGs, thus reinforcing the advocacy efforts of Jeffery Sachs and the UK-led Commission for Africa. Nonetheless, challenges remain, first on the part of donors to live up to their pledges. In this regard, the Secretary-General’s Op Ed piece in today’s NY Times draws attention to the unfortunate gap between pledges and disbursements in a timely, qualitative and quantitative manner. And, secondly, on the part of the recipients of possible significant additional resources, efforts should be made to ensure that monies are well spent and on priority tasks, especially on health, education, water and sanitation. Moreover, issues of accountability and good governance should be seriously addressed, in addition to sound macro-economic policies on the part of the developing countries.

Meanwhile, the NEPAD Secretariat, with support from the UNDP and other bilateral and multilateral donors, has been preparing an MDG Report on Africa. The foundation for the NEPAD African MDG Report is built upon the premise that Africa’s
foremost priority at this stage is to identify the constraints, prospects and challenges in meeting the MDGs and to assess with accuracy the actual human, technological and financial resources needed to reach the goals. The AU/NEPAD MDG Report will be presented at Africa’s own High Level MDG Review Summit to take place a day or two before the AU Summit in July in Addis Ababa as a preclude to the UN Millennium Declaration Review Summit scheduled to take place in New York in September 2005.

Thank you for listening.